



# GCSE (9–1) Classical Greek J292/06 Literature and Culture Prescribed Sources Booklet

# CLASSICAL GREEK LITERATURE & CULTURE: Prescribed Sources Booklet

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# A. Women in Ancient Greece

### 1. The Status of Women in Athens

(i) Although there may be exceptions to the order of nature, the male is by nature fitter for command than the female, just as the older and full-grown is superior to the younger and more immature. But in most constitutional states the citizens rule and are ruled by turns, for the idea of a constitutional state implies that the natures of the citizens are equal, and do not differ at all...the relation of the male to the female is of this kind, but there the inequality is permanent.

The free man rules over the slave after another manner from that in which the male rules over the female, or the man over the child; although the parts of the soul are present in all of them, they are present in different degrees. For the slave has no deliberative faculty at all; the woman has, but it is without authority, and the child has, but it is immature ...'

All classes must be deemed to have their special attributes; as the poet says of women 'silence is a woman's glory'<sup>1</sup>, but this is not equally the glory of a man ...'

Aristotle, Politics 1254b2 & 1260a9

### (ii) Extract from Pericles' Funeral Speech of 429 BC

Perhaps I should say a word or two on the duties of women to those of you who are now widowed. I can say all I have to say in a short word of advice. Your great glory is not to be inferior to what God has made you, and the greatest glory of a woman is to be least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticising you.

Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War 2:46

- (iii) Lysistrata: Previously we used to put up with whatever you men did in silence, thanks to our self-control: for you did not let us grumble, even though we were displeased with you. But we knew perfectly well what you were up to, and often indoors we would hear that you had made a bad decision on some important issue. Then though distressed within we would laugh and ask you: "What have you decided today at the assembly to write on the stone about the peace treaty?" "What's that got to do with you? Keep quiet," my husband would say, and I kept quiet.
  - 1st Woman: I would never have kept quiet.
  - Magistrate: You'd have regretted it if you hadn't kept quiet.
  - Lysistrata: That's why I for one kept quiet at that time. After this we would find out about some even worse decision of yours, then we would ask: "Husband, how is it that you are acting so stupidly?" And he would scowl at me and say that if I didn't get on with my spinning, he'd give me a good clout on the head: "War will be the responsibility of men."

Aristophanes, Lysistrata 507–520

### 2. Marriage in Athens

(i) This is matrimony: when a man begets children and presents his son to his *phratry* and *deme*, and gives his daughters, as being his own, in marriage to their husbands. *Hetaerai* we keep for pleasure, concubines (*pallakai*) for daily attendance upon our person, but wives for the procreation of legitimate children and to be the faithful guardians of our households...'

Demosthenes, Against Neaera 122

(ii) The right age to take a wife to your home is not much short of thirty years and not much more: that is the right age of marriage. The wife should be four years past puberty and marry in the fifth.

Marry a maiden, so that you can teach her reliable habits. The best thing is to marry a girl who lives near you: look all round you, lest by marrying you become a laughing-stock to the neighbours. For a man has no better possession than a good wife, and none more dreadful than a bad one, who is just waiting for the next meal – she scorches him, however vigorous he may be, without the need of a torch, and hurries him to cruel old age.

Hesiod, Works and Days 695–705



(iii) A Pyxis showing a wedding procession

Attributed to Marlay Painter

### (iv) Socrates asks a new husband, Ischomachus, about his wife.

"Ah!" I said, "Ischomachus that is just what I should particularly like to learn from you. Did you yourself educate your wife to be all that a wife should be, or, was she already well skilled enough to perform the duties of a wife when you received her from her father and mother?"

"Well skilled!" he replied, "what could she have known when I married her, she was not quite fifteen at the time, and had been most carefully brought up to see and hear as little as possible, and to ask the fewest questions? Do you not think one should be satisfied, if at marriage her whole experience consists of knowing how to take wool and make a dress, and seeing how her mother's handmaidens had their daily spinning-tasks assigned to them? In regards to control of appetite and self-indulgence, she had received the soundest education; and I think that is the most important matter when bringing-up a man or woman."

"Then all else," I said, "you taught your wife yourself, Ischomachus, until you had made her capable of attending carefully to her duties?"

"Not until I had offered sacrifice, and prayed that I might teach and she might learn all that would lead to the happiness of us both."

"And did your wife join in the sacrifice and prayer to that effect?"

"Most certainly, with many a vow to heaven to become all she ought to be. Her whole manner showed that she would not neglect what was taught to her."

"Tell me Ischomachus, I beg you, what you decided to teach her first. To hear that story would please me more than any description you could give me of the most splendid gymnastic contest or horse-race."

"Why, Socrates, when she had become suitably domesticated, that is, she was tamed enough to take part in a discussion, I asked her this question:

'Have you ever considered, dear wife, what led me to choose you as my wife out of all women, and your parents to entrust you to me of all men? It was certainly not because neither of us could find someone else to share our bed. That I am sure you know. No! It was after great consideration (I for myself and your parents for you) about who would be the best partner for house and children, that I choose you, and your parents, to the best of their ability, choose me. If at some future time God grants us children, we will take counsel together how best to bring them up. For that too will be a common interest, and a common blessing if they live to fight our battles and we find in them support and aid when we are old. But at present there is our house here, which belongs to both of us. It is common property, for all that I possess goes into the common fund, and in the same way all that you had was placed by you into the common fund. We need not stop to calculate in figures which of us contributed most, but rather let us understand that whichever of us proves the better partner, he or she at once contributes what is most worth having."

Xenophon, Oikonomikos 7.10–7.11

## 3. Women's Household Duties in Athens

(i) Athenians, when I decided to get married and took my wife to my home, to start with I behaved in such a way that I neither harassed her nor gave her too much freedom to do whatever she liked, and watched over her as far as I could, and paid attention to her, as you would expect. But when my child was born, I began to trust her and I handed over everything that I had to her, thinking this to be the greatest indication of our closeness.

To begin with, Athenians, she was the best of all women, for she was an intelligent and thrifty housekeeper, and she arranged everything precisely. But when my mother died, her passing proved to be the cause of all my troubles. For when my wife was taking part in the funeral procession she was seen by this fellow, and after a time she was seduced. For he kept watch for the slave girl who used to walk to the market place, and managed to corrupt her with his clever talk.

First, gentleman (for I must explain this to you as well), my little house is on two floors, with the top floor equal to the ground floor, corresponding to the women's quarters and the men's quarters. When we had the child, his mother breast-fed him, and, so that she would not run the risk of falling when she went down the ladder whenever she had to have a wash, I lived upstairs, and the women lived downstairs. And this is what we had got used to, so that often my wife would go downstairs with the child to feed him so that he wouldn't cry. And this went on for a long time, and I never suspected anything, but was so stupid that I thought that my wife was the most chaste in the city.

Lysias, On the Murder of Eratosthenes 6–10

(ii) 'You will have to stay inside and help in sending out the servants with outdoor tasks; you must supervise the indoor servants and receive any income; from this you must meet any necessary expenses, and look after the surplus providently, so that you don't spend the whole year's budget in a month. When wool is brought to you, you must see that the right clothes are made for those who need them. And you must see that the dried corn remains fit for consumption. There is also one duty that may not appeal to you much – looking after any servant who falls ill.'

Xenophon, Oikonomikos 7:35–37

### (iii) The work done by women



Further images on the work done by women can be found at: <u>http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/31.11.10</u>

Attributed to the Amasis Painter

## 4. Women in Sparta

(i) He made the maidens exercise their bodies in running, wrestling, casting the discus, and hurling the javelin, in order that their children might have strong beginnings in strong bodies and mature better, and that the women themselves might withstand childbearing because of their strength, and struggle successfully and easily with the pains of child-birth. He freed them from softness and delicacy and all effeminacy by accustoming the girls no less than the youths to go naked in processions, and at certain festivals to dance and sing when the young men were present to watch. There they sometimes even mocked and teased good-naturedly any youth who had misbehaved; and again they would sing the praises of those who had shown themselves worthy, and so inspired the young men with great ambition and enthusiasm ...

Nor was there anything disgraceful in this nudity of the girls, for it was accompanied by modesty, and there was no wanton behaviour; rather, it produced in them habits of simplicity and a strong desire for health and beauty of body. It gave also to women a taste of noble thoughts, for they felt that they too had a place in the arena of bravery and ambition ...

For their marriages the women were forcibly taken by men not when they were young and unfit for wedlock, but when they were in full bloom and in their prime... [The husband] spent his days with his comrades, and slept with them at night, but visited his bride by stealth and with every precaution, full of dread and fear lest any of her household should be aware of his visits, his bride also planning and conspiring with him that they might have stolen meetings when they could. They didn't just do this for a short time, but long enough for some of them to become fathers before they had seen their own wives by daylight. Such meetings not only developed self-restraint and moderation, but united husbands and wives when their bodies were full of energy and their affections new and fresh, not when they were sated and bored by unrestricted access to each other; so there was always left behind in their hearts some lingering spark of longing and delight.

Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus, 14–15

(ii) The freedom of [Spartan] women is detrimental both to the purpose of the constitution and to the happiness of the state. For just as man and wife are part of a household, it is clear that the state also is divided nearly in half into its male and female population, so in all constitutions in which the position of women is badly managed one half of the state must be considered to have been neglected when the law was made. And this has taken place in the state under consideration, for the lawgiver wishes the whole city to be of strong character and is successful in relation to the men, but in the case of the women has entirely neglected the matter; for they live decadently and luxuriously with every sort of self-indulgence ... and in the time of their empire many things were controlled by the women .... And also nearly two-fifths of the whole area of the country is owned by women, because of the number of women who inherit estates and the practice of giving large dowries; yet it would have been better if dowries had been prohibited by law or limited to a small or moderate amount.

Aristotle, Politics 2.1269b–1270a



# **B.** Athenian Society

# 1. The Acropolis

### (i) The Athenian Acropolis



(ii) Plan of Acropolis



### (iii) Plutarch gives an account of the building of the Athenian Acropolis.

Pericles' answer to the people was that the Athenians were not obliged to give the allies any account of how their money was spent, provided that they carried on the war for them and kept the Persians away. 'They do not give us a single horse, nor a soldier, nor a ship. All they supply is money', he told the Athenians, 'and this belongs not to the people who give it, but to those who receive it, so long as they provide the services they are paid for. It is no more than fair that after Athens has been equipped with all she needs to carry on the war, she should apply the surplus to public works, which, once completed, will bring her glory for all time, and while they are being built will convert that surplus to immediate use. In this way all kinds of enterprises and demands will be created which will provide inspiration for every art, find employment for every hand, and transform the whole people into wage-earners, so that the city will decorate and maintain herself at the same time with her own resources...

... he was also anxious that the unskilled masses, who had no military training, should not be debarred from benefitting from the national income, and yet should not be paid for sitting around and doing nothing. So he boldly laid before the people proposals for immense public works and plans for buildings, which would involve many different arts and industries and require long periods to complete....

The materials to be used were stone, bronze, ivory, gold, ebony and cypress-wood, while the arts or trades which wrought or fashioned them were those of carpenter, modeller, coppersmith, stone-mason, dyer, worker in gold and ivory, painter, embroiderer, and engraver, and besides these the carriers and suppliers of the materials, such as merchants, sailors and pilots for sea-borne traffic, and waggon-makers, trainers of draught animals, and drivers for everything that came by land. There were also rope-makers, weavers, leather workers, road builders and miners....

So the buildings arose, as imposing in their sheer size as they were inimitable in the grace of their outlines, since the artists strove to excel themselves in the beauty of their workmanship. And yet the most wonderful thing about them was the speed with which they were completed.... It is this, above all, which makes Pericles' works an object of wonder to us – the fact that they were created in so short a span, and yet for all time.

Plutarch, Pericles 12–13

# 2. Athenian Population

(i) The present form of the constitution is as follows. Men belong to the citizen body if both their parents are citizens, and they are enrolled as members of their deme at the age of eighteen. When they are enrolled, the members of the deme vote on them under oath to decide, first, whether they have reached the legal age (if the decision goes against them they return to the status of boys) and, secondly, if they are free and born as the law requires.

Aristotle, Constitution of Athens 42.1

(ii) The metics are one of our finest resources; for not only do they maintain themselves and perform many services at no expense to the state, but they also pay a Metic Tax. To show our interest in them it would be sufficient in my opinion if we remove the disabilities which do no good to the state, but appear to detract from the status of metics, and if we no longer compelled them to serve as hoplites alongside citizens... we would also, I think, make the metics better disposed towards us if we gave them the right to serve in the cavalry and other attractive-looking privileges.

Xenophon, Resources 2.1 – 2.5

(iii) Typical forms of employment for Metics:

Khairedemos, a farmer; Leptines, a cook; Demetrios, a carpenter; Euphorion, a muleteer; Kephisodorus, a builder; Hegesias, a gardener; Epameinon, a donkey-driver ... Paidikos, a baker; Sosias, a fuller ...

Inscriptions no.70

(iv) A vase painting showing a shoemaker at work; many such craftsmen would have been metics



(v) The property of Cephisodorus (metic) living in Peiraeus:

165 dr <sup>2</sup> :	Thracian woman
135 dr:	Thracian woman
170 dr:	Thracian male
72 dr:	Carian infant
121 dr:	Colchian male
144 dr:	Scythian male
220 dr:	Thracian woman
301 dr:	Syrian male

Greek Historical Inscriptions M.L. 79:33-46

(vi) I showed her the women's quarters too, separated from the men's quarters by a bolted door, so that nothing could be carried out from inside that should not be, and so that the slaves should not breed without our knowledge. For good slaves become more loyal for the most part when they have children, but bad slaves, when they mate, become readier to commit crimes.

Xenophon, Oikonomikos 9.25

(vii) Hecuba: And finally, to cap all my miseries, I shall have to go to Greece in my old age as a slave woman; me, the mother of Hector, they will load with tasks most uncongenial to my years – keeping the door, guarding the keys, making the bread; and instead of a royal bed, I shall have the floor to lay my shrivelled body on, and a ragged patchwork of rags to clothe my ragged skin.

Euripides, Trojan Women 489-497

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Prices are quoted in Greek drachmas; roughly, 6 obols made up 1 drachma; 100 drachmas made up 1 mina; 600 minae made up 1 talent. According to Aristophanes' *Wasps* 300-302, 3 obols a day was just enough to feed a family of three.

# 3. Athenian Democracy

### (i)

Herald: Who is dictator here?

- Theseus: A bad start, my friend, to look for a dictator here. This city is free, not under one man's rule. The people are sovereign, in annual rota by turns. They do not allow the rich supremacy. The poor have equal rights.
- Herald: There's one point which gives me the best of the game. The city I represent has one man in command, not mob-rule. No one can flatter it, varying his policy to his own advantage, buttering it up, then turning and damaging it, evading the consequences of his own mistakes by blaming others. The people don't know how to weigh arguments or to keep a city straight. Time is needed for wisdom, not off-the-cuff judgements. A working man without money may not be an utter fool, but his work won't allow him to look at the common interest ....
- Theseus: Once laws are framed, the weak and wealthy have an equal chance of justice. Now a man of standing, badly spoken of, is in the same case as his weaker brethren. The little man with right on his side, defeats the great. This is liberty: 'Who wishes to offer the city good advice publicly?' The man who responds wins renown. Those who won't keep quiet. That's political equality.

Euripides, The Suppliant Women 399-441

(ii) A character from a Greek comedy sits alone at the Pnyx waiting for the meeting to start.

'There's a sovereign Ekklesia this morning and the Pnyx here is deserted. They're chattering in the Agora, edging this way and that to avoid the red rope. Even the prytaneis aren't here yet either. They'll be late and then they'll come jostling each other for the front row like nobody's business, flooding down in throngs. But as for peace, they don't care a damn for that. O my city, my city! And I'm always the first to come to the Ekklesia and take my place ... . So now I have come quite prepared to shout and interrupt and slang the speakers if any of them says a single word other than on the subject of peace. But here are the prytaneis arriving – now that it's noon.'

Aristophanes, Acharnians 17ff

(iii) He (Cleisthenes) then made the Council 500-strong instead of 400-strong – fifty from each new tribe .... He also divided the land by "demes" into thirty parts – ten parts in the region in and around the city, ten in the coastal region, and ten in the interior – and he called these parts "thirds". He assigned three thirds to each tribe by lot, in such a way that each tribe should have a share in every region.

Aristotle, Constitution of the Athenians 21.3f

(iv) A council is a popular body; for there must be some such body whose concern is the preparation of business for the people so that they can be effective .... The power of the council is weakened in democracies in which the people come together and deal with everything themselves.

Aristotle, *Politics* 1299b–1300al

(v) Equipment from the Law Courts: Kleroterion for randomly allocating eligible jurors to courts, bronze ballots for voting and jurors' tickets



(vi) In a scene from a comedy, a pathetic image is painted of an old man standing trial in the law court

We the old, the ancient, criticise the state; in our old age we are not looked after by you in a manner worthy of the sea-battles we fought, but we suffer dreadfully. You allow us old folks to be taken to court and laughed at by smart young orators, us mere nonentities, tongue-tied and played out, with our sticks as our trusty Poseidon. And we take our stand in the court mumbling with age, seeing the case only as fog. And the young man, all eager to plead his case, strikes quickly, tying him up with epigrams; then takes him by the scruff of the neck and asks him questions full of traps and pitfalls, confusing and bemusing old Tithonus and tearing him to shreds. And he can only mutter; then goes off convicted; and with sobs and tears says to his friends: 'Here am I, fined all the money I had meant to pay for my coffin.'

How can it be right to destroy an old grey-beard over the water clock, a man who bore his share of toil, and wiped the hot manly sweat in plenty off his brow, a good man and true on the state's behalf at Marathon? We routed the foe at Marathon; now we are routed by worthless fellows, and brought to trial as well.

Aristophanes, Acharnians 676-701



Speeches in the Law Courts were timed using a water clock

(vii)

#### (viii) Aristotle describes the reason for the process of ostracism

Eleven years afterwards came their victory in the battle of Marathon; and in the archonship of Phaenippus, two years after the victory, the people being now in high courage, they put in force for the first time the law about ostracism, which had been enacted owing to the suspicion felt against the men in the positions of power because Peisistratus when leader of the people and general set himself up as tyrant. The first person banished by ostracism was one of his relatives, Hipparchus son of Charmus of the deme of Collytus, the desire to banish him had been Cleisthenes' principal motive in making the law. For the Athenians permitted all friends of the tyrants that had not taken part with them in their offences during the disorders to dwell in the city, in this the customary mildness of the people was displayed; and Hipparchus was the leader and chief of these persons.

Aristotle, The Constitution of Athens 22.3-4



#### (ix) Ostraka from the Athenian Agora



### (x) Extract from Pericles' funeral oration:

Let me say that our system of government does not copy the institutions of our neighbours. It is more the case of our being a model to others than of our imitating anyone else. Our constitution is called a democracy because power is not in the hands of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state, is kept in political obscurity because of poverty. And, just as our political life is free and open, so is our day-today life in our relations with each other ... . We are free and tolerant of our private lives; but in public affairs we keep to the law. This is because it commands our deep respect ... .

We give our obedience to those whom we put in positions of authority, and we obey the laws themselves, especially those which are for the protection of the oppressed, and those unwritten laws which it is an acknowledged shame to break. And here is another point. When our work is over, we are in a position to enjoy all kinds of recreation for our spirits. There are various kinds of contests and sacrifices regularly throughout the year; in our own homes we find a beauty and good taste which delight us every day and which drive away our cares. Then the greatness of our city brings it about that all good things from all over the world flow in to us, so that to us it seems just as natural to enjoy foreign goods as our own local products ....

Our love of what is beautiful does not lead to extravagance; our love of the things of the mind does not make us soft. We regard wealth as something to be properly used, rather than as something to boast about. As for poverty, no one need to be ashamed to admit it: the real shame is not taking practical measures to escape from it. Here each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of state as well: even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well-informed on general politics – this is a peculiarity of ours: we do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all. We Athenians, in our own persons, take our decisions on policy or submit them to proper discussions: for we do not think that there is an incompatibility between words and deeds; the worst thing is to rush into action before the consequences have been properly debated. And this is another point where we differ from other people. We are capable at the same time of taking risks and of estimating them beforehand ....

Taking everything together then, I declare that our city is an education to Greece, and I declare that in my opinion each single one of our citizens, in all the manifold aspects of life, is able to show himself the rightful lord and owner of his own person, and do this, moreover with exceptional grace and exceptional versatility ... Athens, alone of the states we know, comes to her testing time in a greatness that surpasses what was imagined of her. In her case, and in her case alone, no invading enemy is ashamed at being defeated, and no subject can complain of being governed by people unfit for their responsibilities. Mighty indeed are the marks and monuments of our empire which we have left. Future ages will wonder at us, as the present age wonders at us now ... For our adventurous spirit has forced an entry into every sea and every land; and everywhere we have left behind us everlasting memorials of good done to our friends or suffering inflicted on our enemies ....

I would prefer... that you fix your eyes every day on the greatness of Athens as she really is, and should fall in love with her. When you realise her greatness, then reflect that what made her great was men with a spirit of adventure, men who know their duty, men who were ashamed to fall below a certain standard.

Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, 2.36-38

# C. The Olympic Games

# 1. Preparation and Organisation



(ii) The rules for the presidents of the games are not the same now as they were at the first institution of the festival. Iphitus acted as sole president, as likewise did the descendants of Oxylus after Iphitus. But at the fiftieth Festival two men, appointed by lot from all the Eleans, were entrusted with the management of the Olympic Games, and for a long time after this the number of the presidents continued to be two.

But at the ninety-fifth Festival nine umpires were appointed. To three of them were entrusted the chariot-races, another three were to supervise the pentathlon, the rest supervised the remaining contests. At the second Festival after this the tenth umpire was added. At the hundred and third Festival, the Eleans having twelve tribes, one umpire was chosen from each.

But ... the number of tribes was reduced to eight in the hundred and fourth Olympiad. Thereupon were chosen umpires equal in number to the tribes. At the hundred and eighth Festival they returned again to the number of ten umpires, which has continued unchanged down to the present day.

Pausanias, Description of Greece, 5.9.4-6

(iii) The sacred bronze discus inscribed with the terms of the truce (Ekecheiria) established for the Olympic Games



# 2. Competing in the Olympics

(i) About the same time, my father, seeing the festival assembly at Olympia was beloved and admired by the whole world and that in it the Greeks made display of their wealth, strength of body and training, and that not only the athletes were the objects of envy but that also the cities of the victors became renowned, and believing moreover that while the public services performed in Athens contribute greatly to the prestige, in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, of the person who renders them, expenditures in the Olympian Festival, however, enhance the city's reputation throughout all Greece, reflecting on these things, I say, although in natural gifts and in strength of body he was inferior to none, he disdained the gymnastic contests, for he knew that some of the athletes were of low birth, inhabitants of petty states and of mean education, but turned to the breeding of race-horses, which is possible only for those most blessed by Fortune and not to be pursued by one of low estate, and not only did he surpass his rivals, but also all who had ever won the victory.

Isocrates, The Team of Horses 31-34

### (ii) Penalties for those caught cheating

As you go to the stadium along the road from the Metroum, there is on the left at the bottom of Mount Cronius a platform of stone, right by the very mountain, with steps through it. By the platform have been set up bronze images of Zeus. These have been made from the fines inflicted on athletes who have wantonly broken the rules of the contests, and they are called Zanes (figures of Zeus) by the locals ....

The first (Zanes), six in number, were set up in the ninety-eighth Olympiad. For Eupolus of Thessaly bribed the boxers who entered the competition, Agenor the Arcadian and Prytanis of Cyzicus, and with them also Phormio of Halicarnassus, who had won at the preceding Festival. This is said to have been the first time that an athlete violated the rules of the games, and the first to be fined by the Eleans were Eupolus and those who accepted bribes from Eupolus ... .

Pausanias, Description of Greece 5:21.2-3

(iii) Red-figured cup, attributed to the Foundry Painter (c. 500-475 BC): Pankratiasts, boxers and a trainer







(v) For Asopichus of Orchomenus, Boys' Foot Race 488 BC

You who have your home by the waters of Cephisus, who dwell in the town of beautiful horses: songful queens, Graces of splendid Orchomenus, guardians of the ancient race of Minyans, hear me; I am praying. For with your help all delightful and sweet things are accomplished for mortals, if any man is skillful, or beautiful, or splendid. Not even the gods arrange dances or feasts without the holy Graces, who oversee everything that is done in heaven; with their thrones set beside Pythian Apollo of the golden bow, they worship the everlasting honour of the Olympian father. Lady Aglaia, and Euphrosyne, lover of dance and song, daughters of the strongest god, listen now; and you, Thalia, passionate for dance and song, having looked with favour on this victory procession, stepping lightly in honour of gracious fortune. For I have come to sing of Asopichus in Lydian melodies and chosen phrases, because the Minyan land is victorious at Olympia, thanks to you. Now go, Echo, to the dark-walled home of Persephone and bring the glorious message to his father; when you see Cleodamus, tell him that his son, by the famous valley of Pisa, has wreathed his youthful hair with the wings of the renowned games.

Pindar, Olympian Ode 14

# 3. Events

### (i) The moves that are acceptable in Pankration

'Pankratists ... must employ backward falls which are not safe for the wrestler .... They must have skills in various methods of strangling; they also wrestle with an opponent's ankle and twist his arm, besides hitting and jumping on him, for all these practices belong to the pankration, only biting and gouging being excepted.'

Philostratos, On Gymnastic

(ii) You say, "I want to win at Olympia." ...If you do, you will have to obey instructions, eat according to regulations, keep away from desserts, exercise on a fixed schedule at definite hours, in both heat and cold; you must not drink cold water nor can you have a drink of wine whenever you want. You must hand yourself over to your coach exactly as you would to a doctor. Then in the contest itself you must gouge and be gouged, there will be times when you will sprain a wrist, turn your ankle, swallow mouthfuls of sand, and be flogged. And after all that there are times when you lose.

Epictetus, Discourses, 15.2–5

(iii) Greek black figure vase showing athletes running with shields, 500 BC



(iv) ... when the unbroken tradition of the Olympiads began there was first the foot-race, and Coroebus an Elean was victor. There is no statue of Coroebus at Olympia, but his grave is on the borders of Elis. Afterwards, at the fourteenth Festival, the double foot-race was added: Hypenus of Pisa won the prize of wild olive in the double race, and at the next Festival Acanthus of Lacedaemon won in the long course.

At the eighteenth Festival they remembered the pentathlum and wrestling. Lampis won the first and Eurybatus the second, these also being Lacedaemonians. At the twenty-third Festival they restored the prizes for boxing, and the victor was Onomastus of Smyrna, which already was a part of Ionia. At the twenty-fifth they recognized the race of full-grown horses, and Pagondas of Thebes was proclaimed "victor in the chariot-race."

At the eighth Festival after this they admitted the pancratium for men and the horse-race. The horse-race was won by Crauxidas of Crannon, and Lygdamis of Syracuse overcame all who entered for the pancratium. Lygdamis has his tomb near the quarries at Syracuse, and according to the Syracusans he was as big as Heracles of Thebes, though I cannot vouch for the statement.

The contests for boys have no authority in old tradition, but were established by the Eleans themselves because they approved of them. The prizes for running and wrestling open to boys were instituted at the thirty-seventh Festival; Hipposthenes of Lacedaemon won the prize for wrestling, and that for running was won by Polyneices of Elis. At the forty-first Festival they introduced boxing for boys, and the winner out of those who entered for it was Philytas of Sybaris.

The race for men in armour was approved at the sixty-fifth Festival, to provide, I suppose, military training; the first winner of the race with shields was Damaretus of Heraea. The race for two full-grown horses, called synoris (chariot and pair), was instituted at the ninety-third Festival, and the winner was Evagoras of Elis. At the ninety-ninth Festival they resolved to hold contests for chariots drawn by foals, and Sybariades of Lacedaemon won the garland with his chariot and foals.

Afterwards they added races for chariots and pairs of foals, and for single foals with rider. It is said that the victors proclaimed were: for the chariot and pair, Belistiche, a woman from the seaboard of Macedonia; for the ridden race, Tlepolemus of Lycia. Tlepolemus, they say, won at the hundred and thirty-first Festival, and Belistiche at the third before this. At the hundred and forty-fifth Festival prizes were offered for boys in the pancratium, the victory falling to Phaedimus, an Aeolian from the city Troas.

Pausanias, Description of Greece, 5.8.6–11

# 4. Religious Aspects

(i) But the Zeus in the Council Chamber is of all the images of Zeus the one most likely to strike terror into the hearts of sinners. He is surnamed Oath-god, and in each hand he holds a thunderbolt. Beside this image it is the custom for athletes, their fathers and their brothers, as well as their trainers, to swear an oath upon slices of boar's flesh that in no way will they sin against the Olympic games. The athletes take this further oath also, that for ten successive months they have strictly followed the regulations for training.

An oath is also taken by those who examine the boys, or the foals entering for races, that they will decide fairly and without taking bribes, and that they will keep secret what they learn about a candidate, whether accepted or not. I forgot to inquire what it is customary to do with the boar after the oath of the athletes, though the ancient custom about victims was that no human being might eat of that on which an oath had been sworn.

Pausanias, Description of Greece, 5.24.9–10

(ii) The fame of the temple was originally owing to the oracle of the Olympian Jove; yet after that had ceased, the renown of the temple continued, and increased, as we know, to a high degree of celebrity, both on account of the assembly of the people of Greece, which was held there, and of the Olympic games, in which the victor was crowned. These games were esteemed sacred, and ranked above all others. The temple was decorated with abundance of offerings, the contributions of all Greece.

Strabo, Geography, 8.3.30



(iii) Cross section of the temple of Zeus, Olympia, showing the colossal statue of Zeus (modern artist's reconstruction)

(iv) The image itself was created by Pheidias, as is testified by an inscription written under the feet of Zeus:-

#### Pheidias, son of Charmides, an Athenian, made me.

The temple is in the Doric style, and the outside has columns all around it. It is built of native stone.

Its height up to the pediment is sixty-eight feet, its breadth is ninety-five, its length two hundred and thirty. The architect was Libon, a native. The tiles are not of baked earth, but of Pentelic marble cut into the shape of tiles ....

The god sits on a throne, and he is made of gold and ivory. On his head lies a garland which is a copy of olive shoots. In his right hand he carries a Victory, which, like the statue, is of ivory and gold; she wears a ribbon and – on her head – a garland. In the left hand of the god is a sceptre, ornamented with every kind of metal, and the bird sitting on the sceptre is the eagle. The sandals also of the god are of gold, as is likewise his robe. On the robe are embroidered figures of animals and the flowers of the lily.

The throne is adorned with gold and with jewels, to say nothing of ebony and ivory. Upon it are painted figures and wrought images. There are four Victories, represented as dancing women, one at each foot of the throne, and two others at the base of each foot ...

The throne is supported not only by the feet, but also by an equal number of pillars standing between the feet. It is impossible to go under the throne, in the way we enter the inner part of the throne at Amyclae. At Olympia there are screens constructed like walls which keep people out. Of these screens the part opposite the doors is only covered with dark-blue paint; the other parts show pictures by Panaenus ....

On the pedestal supporting the throne and Zeus with all his adornments are works in gold: the Sun mounted on a chariot, Zeus and Hera, Hephaestus, and by his side Grace. Close to her comes Hermes, and close to Hermes Hestia. After Hestia is Eros receiving Aphrodite as she rises from the sea, and Aphrodite is being crowned by Persuasion. There are also reliefs of Apollo with Artemis, of Athena and of Heracles; and near the end of the pedestal Amphitrite and Poseidon, while the Moon is driving what I think is a horse. Some have said that the steed of the goddess is a mule not a horse, and they tell a silly story about the mule.

I know that the height and breadth of the Olympic Zeus have been measured and recorded; but I shall not praise those who made the measurements, for even their records fall far short of the impression made by a sight of the image. The god himself according to legend bore witness to the artistic skill of Pheidias. For when the image was quite finished Pheidias prayed the god to show by a sign whether the work was to his liking. Immediately, runs the legend, a thunderbolt fell on that part of the floor where down to the present day the bronze jar stood to cover the place.

Pausanias, Description of Greece, 5.10.2–5.11.9

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